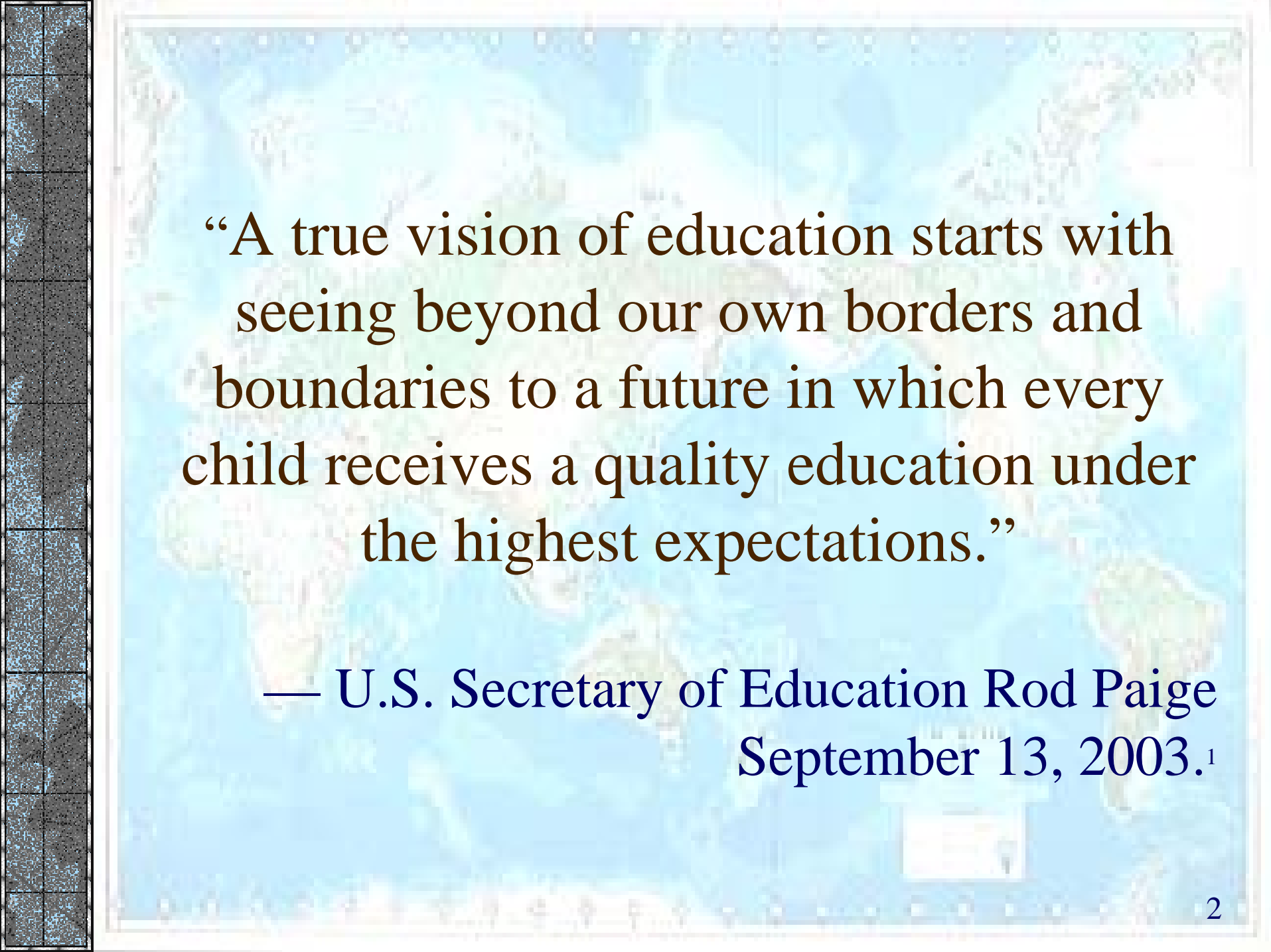


The State of International Education in the United States

November 15, 2004

Joseph A. Esposito, Deputy Under Secretary
for International Affairs
U.S. Department of Education



“A true vision of education starts with seeing beyond our own borders and boundaries to a future in which every child receives a quality education under the highest expectations.”

— U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige
September 13, 2003.¹

What Is International Education?

From a U.S. perspective, international education is about U.S. students' knowledge of the people and cultures of the world. Building on a strong foundation of reading, math and science, students' core knowledge can be enhanced through:

- The study of foreign languages;
- Instruction in world history, geography, comparative studies and other subjects; and
- International exchanges of students and teachers.

Why Be Concerned With the State of “International Education?”

- ✧ *No Child Left Behind*, the core of education reform in the United States, focuses on strengthening students’ content knowledge and teacher quality, including in the fields of foreign language and the social sciences.
- ✧ According to assessments of educational progress, students typically exhibit low levels of proficiency in subjects like geography, as they do math, science and reading.
- ✧ Leaders in education, government and business, including the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, recognize the important role of international education-related coursework in strengthening the skills students need to succeed in the 21st century.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills outlined the skills students now require, including:

- ✦ *Mastery of core knowledge* in key content areas, such as math, science and foreign languages, as well as the ability to use that knowledge;
- ✦ *Personal responsibility*, including the ability to work with others in order to acquire knowledge throughout their lives;
- ✦ *Skills to communicate clearly* with those of different cultures, both orally and in writing and in more than one language; and
- ✦ *The ability to use information and communication technologies* and to apply computer literacy skills in real-world situations.²

Overview

- ✧ The Need for International Education
- ✧ The Demand for International Education
- ✧ The State of International Education
 - Foreign Language Instruction
 - World Knowledge Instruction
 - Student and Teacher Exchanges
- ✧ Summary

The Need for International Education

- ✧ National Security
- ✧ Economic Competitiveness
- ✧ Academic Improvement
- ✧ Understanding and Peace

The Need: National Security

International skills are in high demand in the military, diplomatic and intelligence Sectors.

*“The [Army, Department of State, Foreign Commercial Service, and FBI]...reported **shortages of translators and interpreters** as well as ... diplomats and intelligence specialists, with **foreign language skills that are critical** to successful job performance...[T]hese shortfalls have adversely affected agency operations and hindered U.S. military, law enforcement, intelligence, counterterrorism, and diplomatic efforts.”*

— General Accountability Office Report, January 2002³

*“...Effective public diplomacy..requires well-trained staff with an **in-depth knowledge of the culture** in target countries and **fluency in local languages**. Since 9/11, especially, it has become clear that training, knowledge, and fluency are all sorely inadequate.”*

— Changing Minds, Winning Peace, October 1, 2003⁴

The Need: Economic Competitiveness

Workers with international skills are increasingly important to U.S. competitiveness.

*“Education is the ticket to personal prosperity. Without a good education, the workers of tomorrow simply won't be able to compete in the modern global economy. And the **workers of today need access to new skills and new opportunities** through continuing education and training.”*

— President George W. Bush, 2004⁵

*“The failure to teach languages, the failure to teach history and comparative cultures is **becoming a major liability.**”*

— Stanley Roth, Vice President for Asia/International Relations,
the Boeing Company, 2004⁶

The Need: Academic Improvement

Improved world knowledge and skills are key requirements for success in the 21st century.

“Unless improvements are made, American students will not be competitive with students in other countries...we must improve our educational system before the rest of the world leaves us behind.”

— U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige,
September 24, 2004⁷

The Need: Understanding and Peace

Promoting peace and freedom worldwide requires that students understand their world.

“The more we learn about and understand each other, the more effective we will be in creating a world of global citizens, and the better our chances of achieving peace in our increasingly interdependent world.”

— U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, October, 15, 2004⁸

“Global studies opens kids’ eyes up to feelings and emotions, to empathy and compassion. It far extends beyond the classroom.”

—Angel Geden-Wilson, Teacher, 2004⁹

The Demand for International Education

With increasing travel, technology and trade:

- ✦ **Students** want international knowledge;
- ✦ **The public** knows international knowledge is important; and
- ✦ **Educators** increasingly require that students gain internationally relevant skills.

Student Demand

High school students seek information about their world.

- ✦ According to an annual survey conducted in 2003 on the state of our nation's youth, 58 percent of students said that school, class work and homework assignments were very important sources of information for them about world events and cultures.¹⁰
- ✦ In the same survey one year later, 76 percent of students said they would like to know more about the world.¹¹
- ✦ In 2004, 28 percent of students said they use a foreign news source to learn more about current events.¹²

Student Demand

College-bound students value international skills.

- ✦ In 1990, 29,000 students took the Advanced Placement (AP) exam in European history and geography was 29,000. By 2003, the number of students taking these exams (as well as exams in world history and comparative politics) had increased to 127,423.¹³
- ✦ The College Board had the largest first-time subscription ever when the AP World History Exam was introduced in 2002.¹⁴
- ✦ Spanish language and European history were the seventh and eighth most highly subscribed AP exams of the 34 offered in 2003.¹⁵

Public Demand

Americans believe that international knowledge is important.

- ✳ In a 2001 national opinion survey, 77 percent of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that foreign language training should be made mandatory in high school.¹⁶
- ✳ Some 71 percent of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that foreign language should be required at colleges and universities.¹⁷
- ✳ Finally, 93 percent said they believed that knowledge about international issues will be somewhat (30 percent) or very (63 percent) important for the careers of their children.¹⁸

Educator Demand

Education leaders are requiring that students acquire international skills.

- ✦ As of 2002, three states and the District of Columbia required all high school students to take a foreign language courses to graduate. Thirteen additional states required it for an advanced diploma and three states required that graduates demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language.¹⁹
- ✦ From 1988 to 2001, the percentage of community colleges requiring previous foreign language coursework for entrance by some or all students increased from 2 percent to 9 percent, and the percentage for four-year institutions increased from 16 to 30 percent.²⁰
- ✦ In 2002, 27 states and the District of Columbia required some global studies, world history or geography.²¹

The State of International Education

Collected information shows both good news and challenges in the current state of:

- ✦ Foreign language instruction;
- ✦ Courses that develop students' knowledge of the world, such as geography, world history and area studies; and
- ✦ Exchanges and other types of access for students and teachers to international counterparts.




Foreign Language Instruction: The Good News

Large numbers of public high school graduates take foreign language courses.

- ✦ High school graduates' foreign language course taking nearly doubled between 1982 and 2000 from about two semesters to about four semesters in 2000.²²
- ✦ In 2000, 5,898,000 public high school students (44 percent) were enrolled in foreign language courses²³, and 83 percent of high school students completed some foreign language courses before graduating.²⁴
- ✦ According to a 2003 report by the American Council on Education, 88 percent of college students studied some foreign language prior to entering college.²⁵

More high school students are engaged in advanced foreign language instruction.

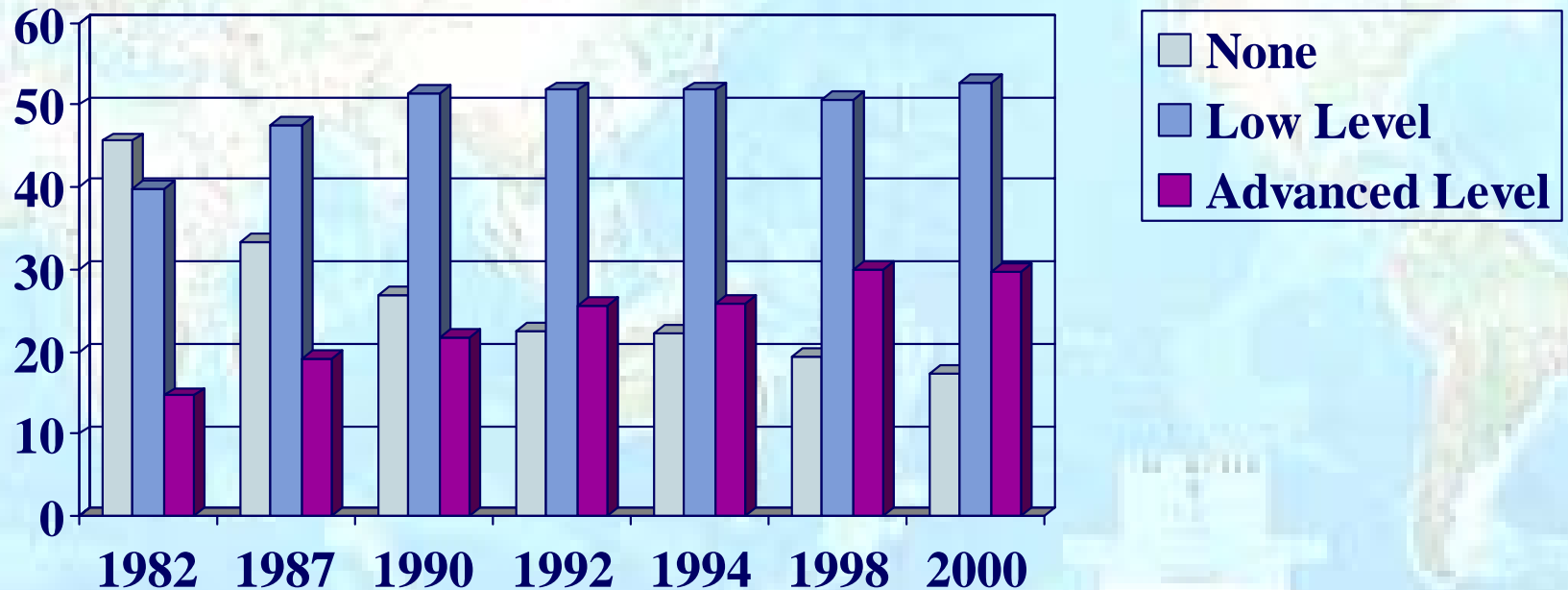
- ✦ Roughly 15 percent of graduates completed some advanced foreign language study in 1982. By 2000, this percentage doubled to nearly 30 percent (the percentage of those who had not completed any foreign language decreased markedly from 46 percent to 17 percent).²⁶
- ✦ In 1999-2000, about 17 percent of public secondary schools, not including charters, offered some form of foreign language immersion.²⁷
- ✦ Demand for AP courses in a broader range of languages has led the College Board to introduce four new tests: Italian and Russian (2006) and Chinese and Japanese (2007).²⁸



Foreign Language Instruction: The Challenges

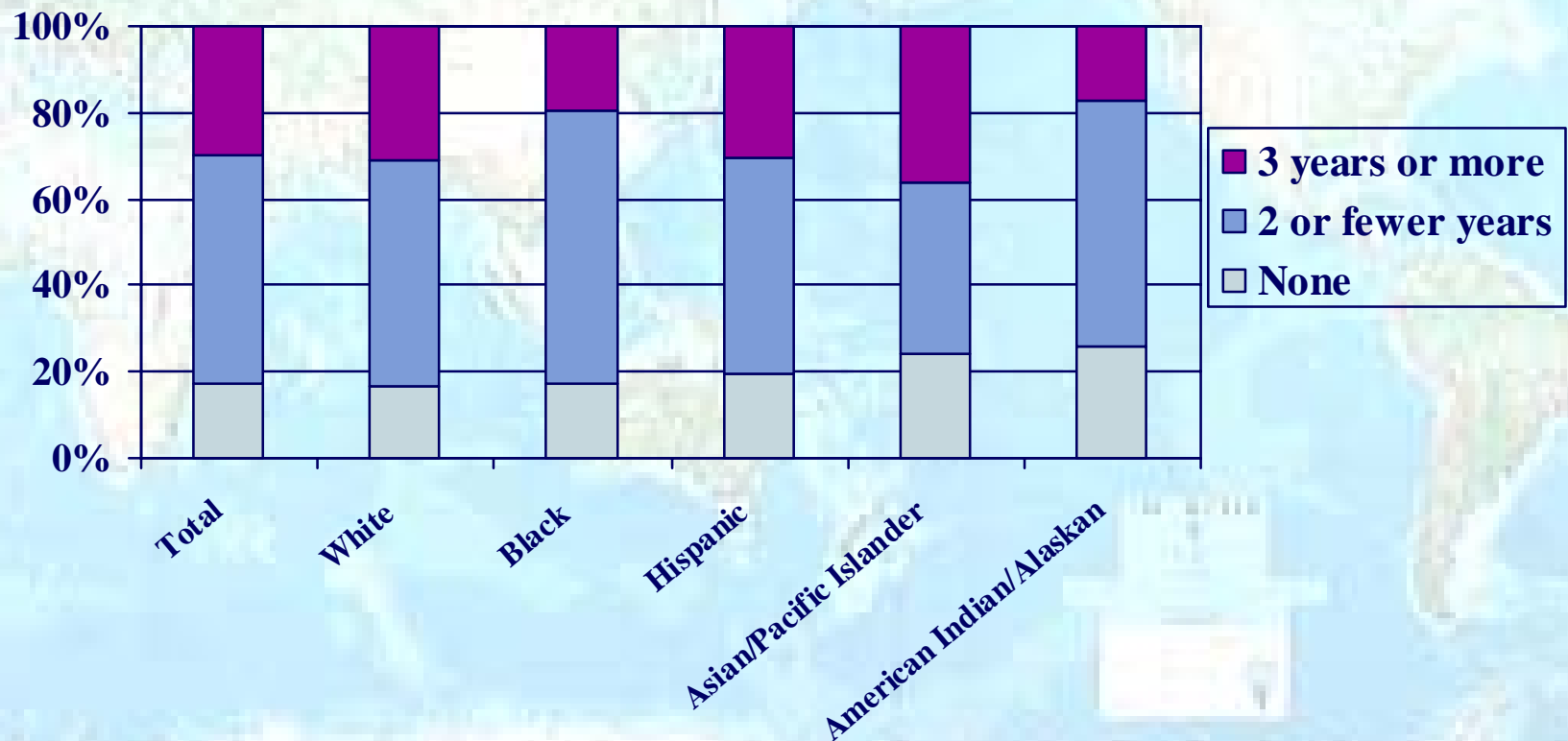
Despite increases, relatively few students attain advanced foreign language proficiency.

Percentage of High School Graduates by Level of Foreign Language Course Completion, 1982-2000²⁹



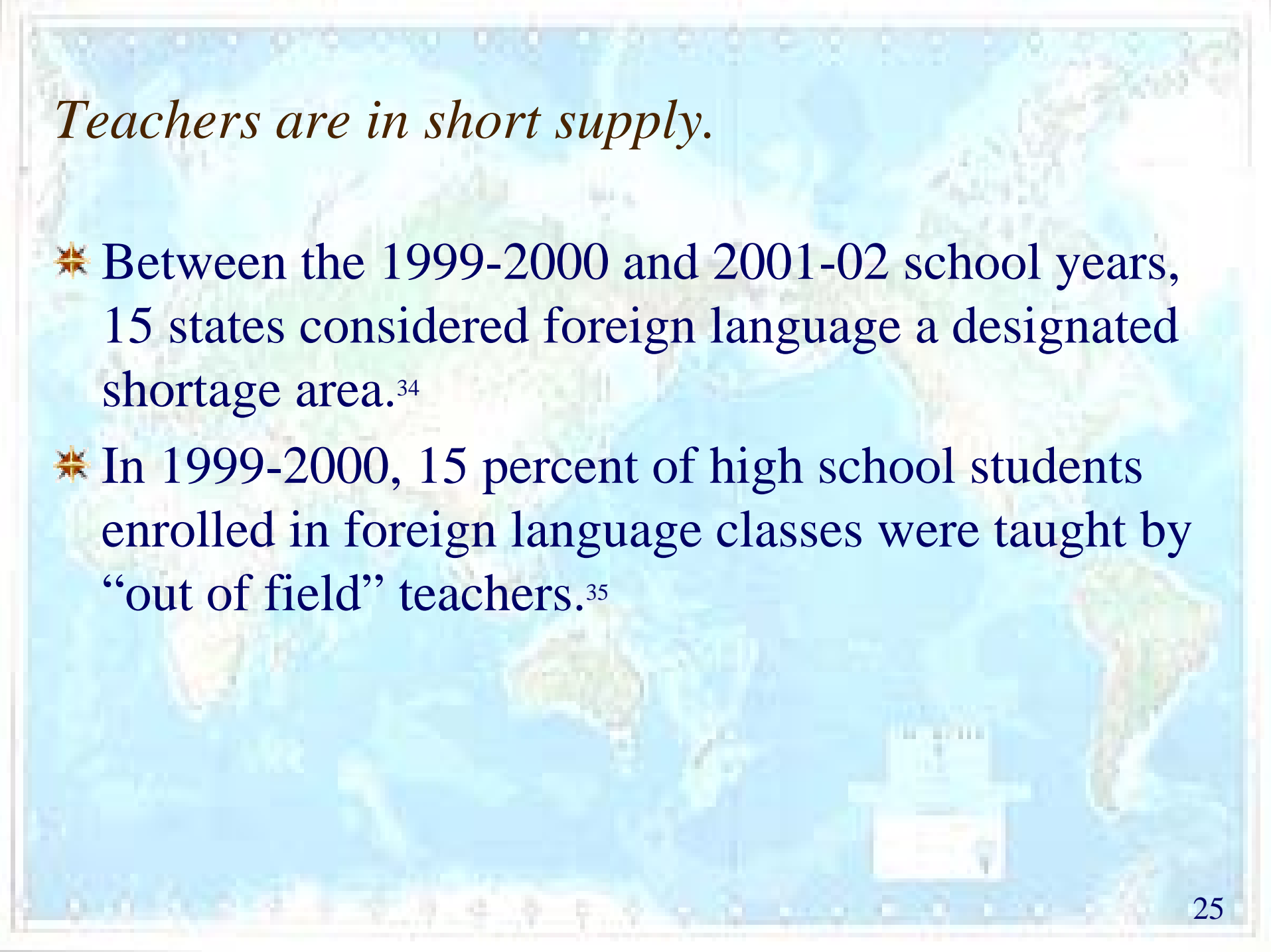
There is a disparity in the level of course taking among students of different racial/ethnic groups.

Percent of 2000 High School Graduates by Rates of Highest Language Level Completed, 2000.³⁰



Postsecondary course taking and degrees awarded in foreign languages are low.

- ✦ Foreign language enrollments as a percentage of total enrollment has remained relatively unchanged since the 1970s. Enrollment in the less commonly taught languages of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East remains particularly low.³¹
- ✦ In 2000-2001, approximately 1 percent of all B.A.s were awarded in foreign languages and literatures.³²
- ✦ Of the 15,146 B.A. degrees in foreign languages conferred in 2000-01, 328 were in Japanese, 183 in Chinese, 27 in Hebrew, 29 in other Middle Eastern languages, and only 7 in Arabic.³³

A faint, light blue map of the United States serves as the background for the slide. The map shows the outlines of the states and major bodies of water.

Teachers are in short supply.

- ✦ Between the 1999-2000 and 2001-02 school years, 15 states considered foreign language a designated shortage area.³⁴
- ✦ In 1999-2000, 15 percent of high school students enrolled in foreign language classes were taught by “out of field” teachers.³⁵



World Knowledge Instruction: The Good News

World history and geography are commonly taken.

- ✦ Since 1990, high school students have been earning more credits in world history and geography—up from .5-1 year to at least 1 year, on average.³⁶
- ✦ Slightly more than half of U.S. college students reported taking at least one internationally focused class (besides a language course) during the 2001-02 school year. This was true of 56 percent of those in four-year institutions and 42 percent of those in two-year institutions.³⁷
- ✦ Analysis of college transcripts show that world history is ranked ninth among the 30 most common courses taken by U.S. graduates of colleges and universities.³⁸



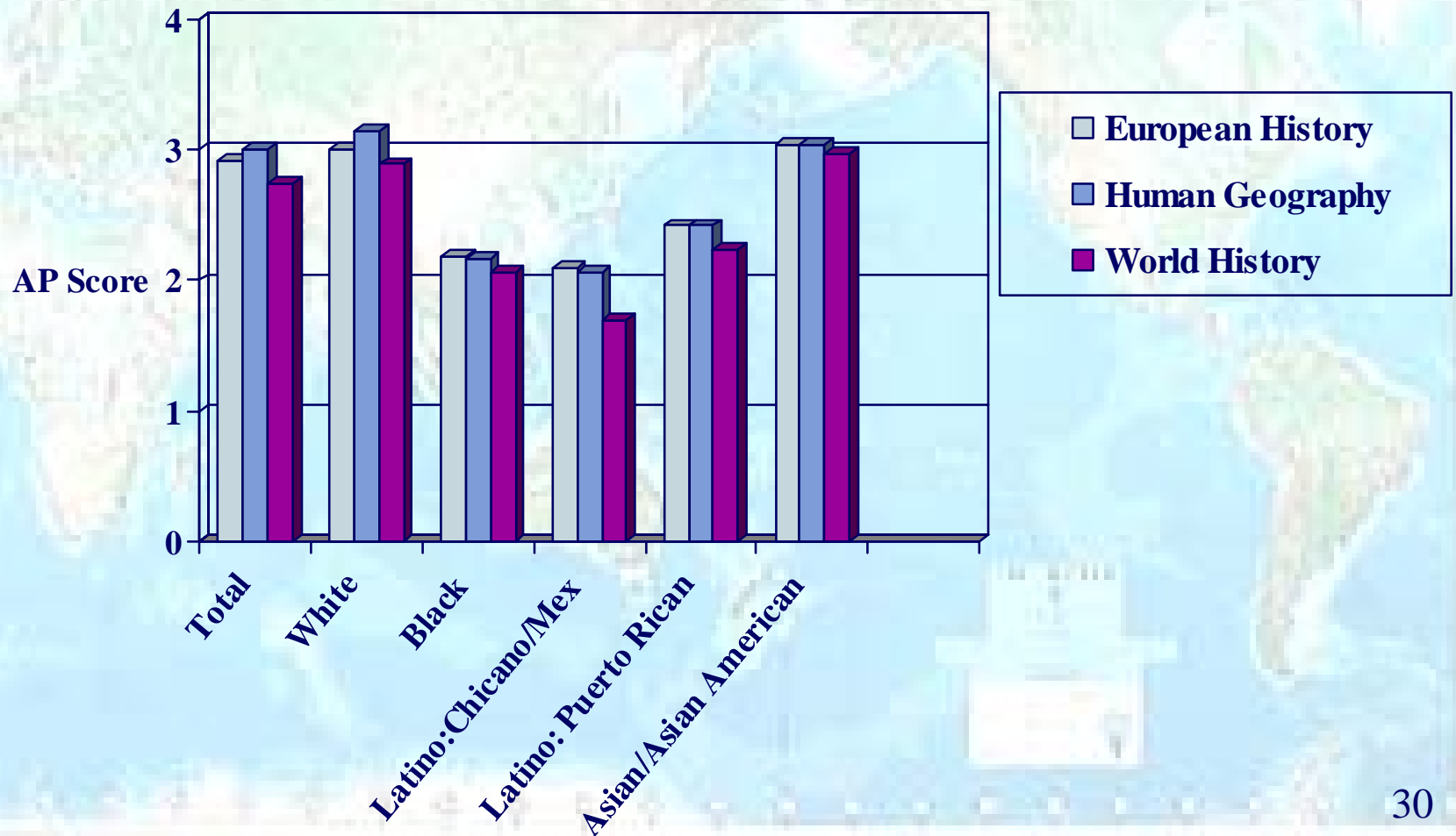
World Knowledge Instruction: The Challenges

Students demonstrate insufficient world knowledge.

- ✦ According to the NAEP, 21, 30 and 25 percent of students in the 4th, 8th and 12th grades respectively performed at the “proficient” level in geography while 26, 26 and 29 percent, respectively, did not reach the “basic” level.³⁹
- ✦ U.S. students scored eighth of nine participating countries on the National Geographic-Roper 2002 Global Geographic Literacy Survey.⁴⁰
- ✦ U.S. students were least likely among those in nine participating countries in the 2002 National Geographic-Roper study to correctly identify Afghanistan as the country where the Taliban and al Qaeda were based, while only one student in seven could correctly identify Iraq on a map of the Middle East.⁴¹

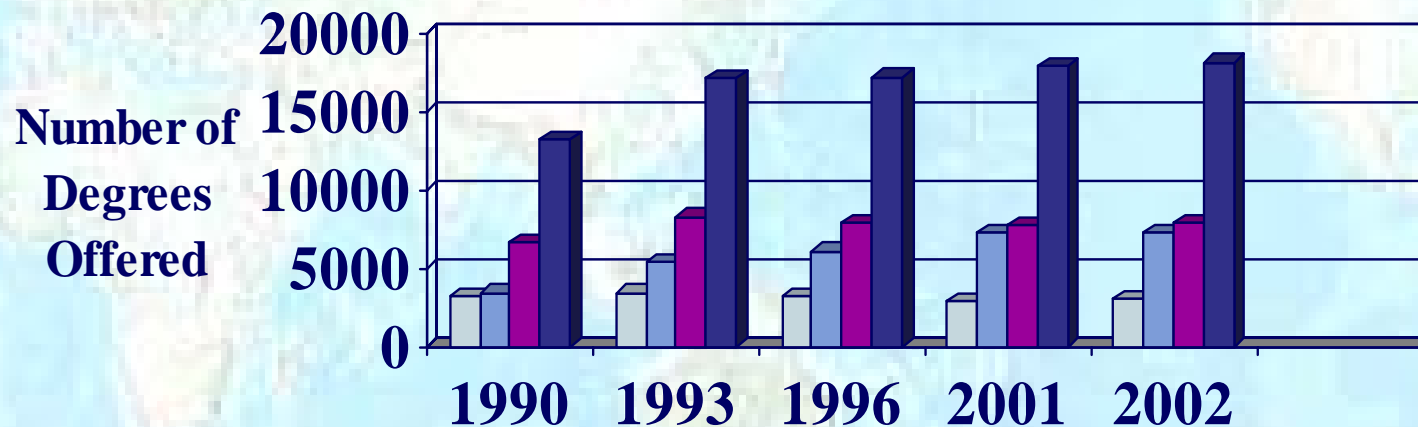
There is a disparity in achievement among students of different racial/ethnic groups.

Average AP Score in Select Subjects, by Race/Ethnicity, 2002.⁴²



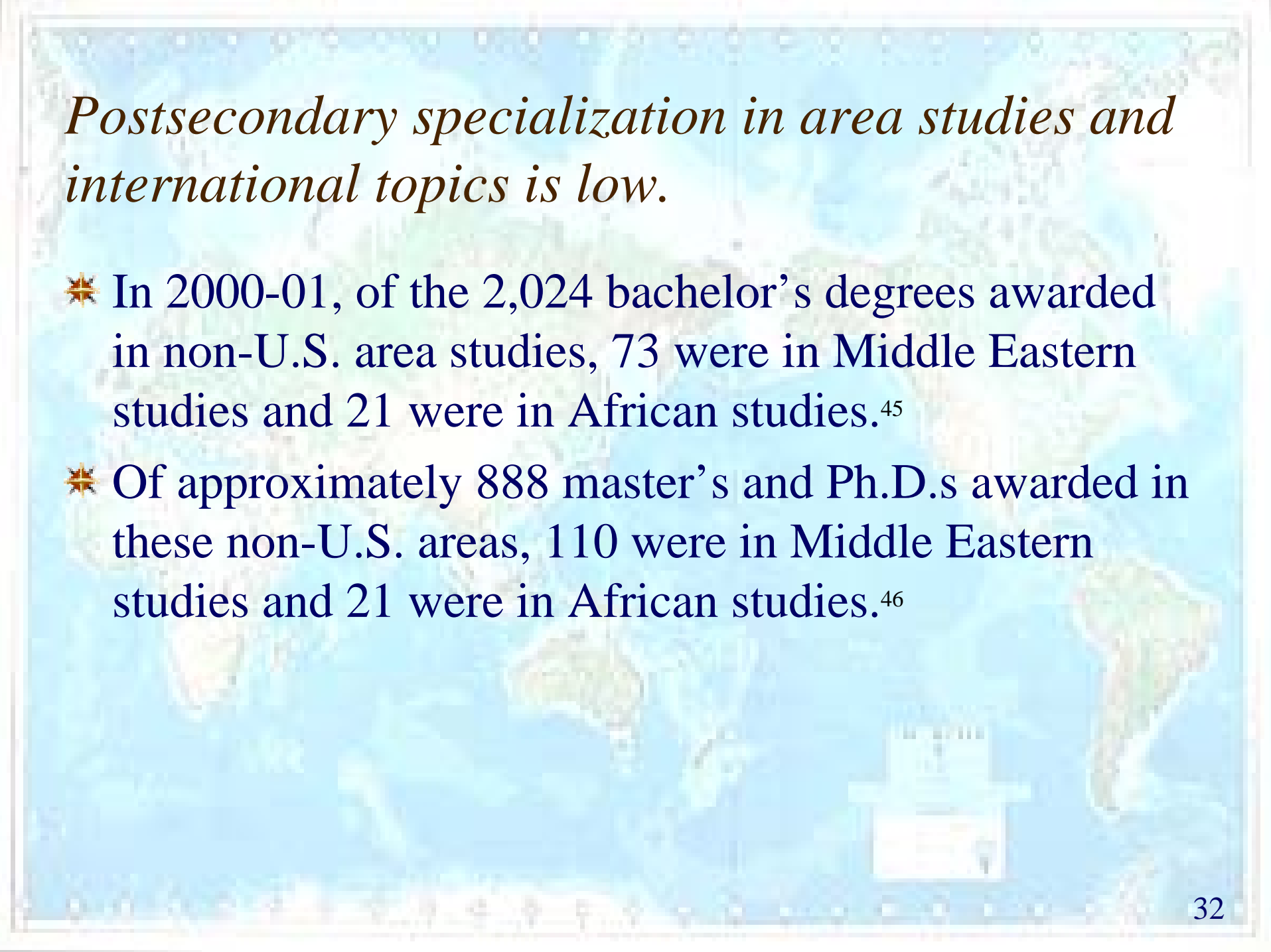
The number of higher education degrees awarded in international areas appears to be leveling off.

**Number of Bachelor's, Master's, and
Doctoral Degrees Conferred in Selected
Areas, 1990-2002.⁴³**



In 2002, these degrees represented only 1 percent of all degrees conferred.⁴⁴

- Non-U.S. Area Studies
- International Business
- International Relations and Affairs
- Total



Postsecondary specialization in area studies and international topics is low.


- ✦ In 2000-01, of the 2,024 bachelor's degrees awarded in non-U.S. area studies, 73 were in Middle Eastern studies and 21 were in African studies.⁴⁵
- ✦ Of approximately 888 master's and Ph.D.s awarded in these non-U.S. areas, 110 were in Middle Eastern studies and 21 were in African studies.⁴⁶

Educators are not well grounded in world geography.

According to the 2001 NAEP for geography:

✧ Just over one-quarter of eighth-grade teachers (28 percent) had a graduate or undergraduate major or minor in geography. This was true of only 7 percent of teachers at the fourth-grade level.⁴⁷

✧ Thirty-one percent of fourth-grade teachers and 44 percent of eighth-grade teachers felt they were “very prepared” to teach geography.⁴⁸



Student and Teacher Exchanges: The Good News


Many U.S. students share classrooms with international students, both in the United States and abroad.

- ✦ In 2003-04, over 2,200 U.S. high school students studied abroad for at least one semester in programs certified by the Council on Standards in International Education. Over 24,000 international students studied in U.S. high schools.⁴⁹
- ✦ According to the Institute for International Education, the number of students from a U.S.-accredited institution of higher education studying abroad since 1991-92 has grown 126 percent.⁵⁰ During 2001-02, the number of these students was 160,920.⁵¹
- ✦ In 2003, 586,323 international college students studied in the United States.⁵²

U.S. classrooms use technology to connect with students and teachers in other countries.

For example:

- ✦ Over 500 U.S. schools participate in collaborative activities with classrooms in 109 countries through iEARN. Over 10,000 U.S. teachers have attended trainings on project-based collaborative learning using the Internet since 1988 and 250 are currently enrolled in on-line professional development opportunities.⁵³
- ✦ Each year, approximately two million U.S. students and teachers interact with peers in 190 countries through ePALS. U.S. users hold over one million accounts through ePALS for safe e-mail exchange.⁵⁴



Student and Teacher Exchanges: The Challenges

U.S. teachers participate in exchanges, but at relatively low rates.

- ✦ In 2003, the U.S. Department of Education, among others, funded exchanges for over 998 teachers and administrators.⁵⁵
- ✦ An analysis of college transcripts show that three percent of all education majors and 5 percent of those students who became teachers studied abroad as undergraduates between 1972 and 2000.⁵⁶
- ✦ Data from the same transcript study showed that undergraduates who pursued other professions between 1972 and 2000, such as law, engineering and architecture, studied abroad at much higher rates (12-13 percent).⁵⁷

The level and diversity of student visitors at the postsecondary level is waning.

- ✦ In 2003-04, the number of foreign students enrolling in U.S. higher education declined, for the first time in 20 years, by 2.4 percent.⁵⁸
- ✦ The composition of international students in the United States began shifting significantly in 2003, with decreases among many Muslim-majority nations (though the absolute number did not decrease because of ongoing increases from China and India.)⁵⁹
- ✦ In 2004, of 34 Muslim-majority nations, 28 experienced declines in the number of students in U.S. higher education institutions the previous year.⁶⁰

Summary

We're doing better, but not well enough.

- ✦ Interest in course-taking and assessment in subjects such as foreign languages, world history and geography, particularly at the high school level, has increased substantially since the 1980s.
- ✦ Interest in advanced courses in foreign languages is growing at the high school level; however, at the postsecondary and advanced levels, specialization in international areas remains relatively low.
- ✦ Many U.S. high school and college students interact with their peers in other countries, including through the use of technology and other means. This is less true of future teachers.

The International Affairs Office and Next Steps

The International Affairs Office supports the goals of U.S. education and foreign policy by promoting the development of international skills and knowledge among U.S. students and educators. We also share what we learn from our international counterparts with the U.S. education community and vice versa.

Monitoring the State of International Education

To further assess the state of international education, we will continue to work with our partners in the education community to track key indicators, such as:

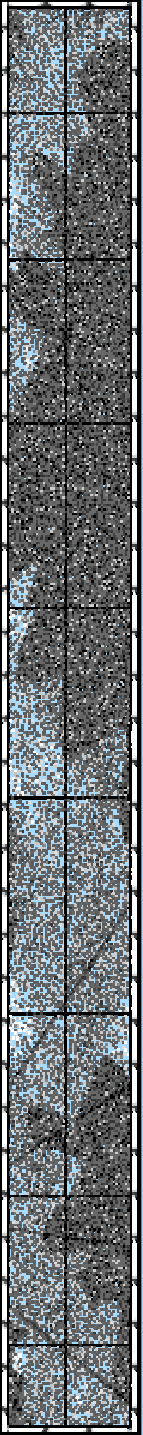
- ✧ Elementary schools offering foreign language courses
- ✧ Advanced course-taking in foreign languages
- ✧ Higher education degrees in foreign languages
- ✧ The supply of foreign language instructors
- ✧ Enrollment in international studies courses
- ✧ Performance in international subjects
- ✧ Degrees awarded in international studies
- ✧ Teacher knowledge of subjects in the international area of study
- ✧ Participation in international student and teacher exchanges
- ✧ Use of technology in educational exchanges

Assessing the State of Education Internationally

- ☀ *No Child Left Behind* brings focus to our need to strengthen students' content knowledge and teacher quality in the basics—math, science, and reading—as skill in these subjects is key for success in the 21st century.
- ☀ We have much to learn from our counterparts in other countries in each of these areas, and we have a steady stream of solid data being supplied to us by OECD, TIMSS and PIRLS. These data illustrate how our education system compares to other systems worldwide.
- ☀ In 2005, we plan to gather this information and report on the “State of Education Internationally.”

Strengthening International Education and Education Internationally

- ✦ *NCLB*'s emphasis on standards, accountability and teacher quality is already influencing areas of international study, including foreign language and the social sciences.
- ✦ Through our involvement in international benchmarking and cooperative activities, we will continue to share the major tenets of *NCLB*.



“Education is the common denominator of all people, the road to emancipation and liberty, the way we find our humanity and discover our soul. Education is the surest road to peace and prosperity, freedom and democracy.”

— U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, World Affairs
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